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TRUTH IN LOVE

Protector or Pimp?

By Parris J. Baker
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On the campaign trail, U.S. presidential candidate Donald Trump comments on women to make his case as a 'protector' of them if elected. But how does this compare to his past comments, and actions? What does history tell us in the present if we're to anticipate a future?

I was asked recently to comment on a statement former U.S. President Donald Trump made about women. On Monday, Sept. 23, during a campaign rally held at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Trump said:

You will no longer be abandoned, lonely or scared. You will no longer be in danger. You're not gonna be in danger any longer. You will no longer have anxiety from all of the problems our country has today. You will be protected, and I will be your protector. Women will be happy, healthy, confident, and free. You will no longer be thinking about abortion.

A few days earlier, Trump had made a similar promise to rally attendees in North Carolina:

I will protect women at a level never seen before. They will finally be healthy, hopeful, safe and secure. ... Their lives will be happy, beautiful, and their lives will be great again. So, women, we love you. We're going to take care of you.

Without thinking, I responded immediately and abruptly, "That's 'pimp' language! Donald Trump is a pimp! He is a predator, not a protector."

Perhaps my foot was in my mouth with that in-the-moment reaction, but I have given it more thought. Trump, from my observation, has all the characteristics of a “Romeo Pimp.” Let me explain.

Pimps employ a variety of tactics to gain and maintain control of those they control, dominate, or victimize, such as demonstrated violence and brutality, verbal threats of abuse and physical violence, coercion, fraud and financial exploitation, and various forms of manipulation (physical and psychological). Pimps demand extreme and unfailing loyalty, usually expressed in ways that establish permanent affiliations, such as branding (tattoos or scarring), seasoning (public denouncement of family and friends), and other cultist commitments of compliance.

There was a time when being called “a pimp” would have been considered chiefly a negative slur, an undesired status, or an identity reserved for members of the criminal underworld, the trashy low-life people, or those who invest in dishonest “hustling” and unscrupulous criminal enterprises. However, the personification of “pimping” through mass media outlets and clever marketing have created a new normal in which pimping behaviors are revered in rap lyrics, promoted in television shows such as “Pimp My Ride,” and idolized and celebrated by adoring fans who have learned to overlook or accept the egregious and criminal behaviors of high-profile sports figures, celebrities, and elected officials.

But what is a “Romeo Pimp”, and how does it apply here?

There are three general profiles of pimps or sexual traffickers.

1. The *CEO* Pimp – this pimp conducts the commerce of prostitution like a legitimate business. The CEO pimp is dressed in business attire and looks like a successful entrepreneur. Jeffery Epstein, who was convicted of sex trafficking of minors, procurement of a child for prostitution, and solicitation of a prostitution, was a wealthy financier who operated an escort service for the social elite.
2. The *Gorilla* Pimp – fitting the stereotype image of a pimp, this person exhibits traits of hegemonic masculinity and conspicuous consumption, flouting wealth with the purchase of extravagance for the explicit purpose of displaying one’s wealth and power. This garish display of wealth is used to attract potential victims and to demonstrate superiority over others. The use of coercion, intimidation, and violence are commonly used to control victims, and anyone (family, friends) associated with the victim. Sean “Diddy” Combs fits this profile.
3. The *Romeo* Pimp – using the process of romance as an exploitation device, this pimp attempts to manipulate the victim to fall in love with

them with lies and deception. Though threats of violence and harm to others are used, this pimp relies on establishing psychological dependence and manipulation so that the prostitute becomes unwaveringly loyal and believes this pimp always has their best interests at heart. This profile perhaps best describes Donald Trump.

The implications for identifying Trump as a Romeo Pimp has a greater purpose than humor or irony. Far greater is the inference that, in the perception of Trump, women specifically and American citizens in general, are considered prostitutes in his stable who exist to satisfy his needs and are in need his protection. In a true pimp maneuver, Trump has threatened to punish or execute those individuals who challenge him, desert him, or belittle him. He has also vowed to protect us from vermin, rapists, criminal cartels, pet-eating savages, and all the other boogeymen he advances.

In an apparent attempt to be smooth and sultry, Trump whispered to the audience^[1], “I will protect you **and I** (emphasis added by the author) will be your protector.” And with 34 felony convictions and a \$130,000 payoff to an adult film actress, a civil conviction of sexual assault, nearly 25 women who have openly accused him of sexual assault and unsolicited touching and groping, and by his own admission:

Yeah, that’s her. With gold. I better use some Tic Tacs just in case I start kissing her. You know, I’m automatically attracted to beautiful — I just start kissing them. It’s like a magnet. Just kiss. I don’t even wait. And when you’re a star, they let you do it. You can do anything.

Additionally, it is worth asking: Who is the “we” that Trump references in his speeches?

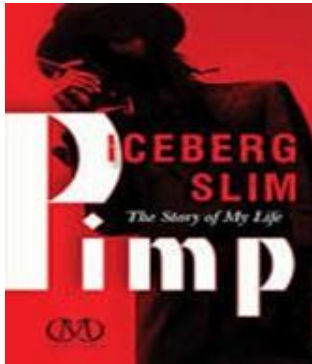
I believe that the English adage, “Birds of a feather flock together” applies here. Over the past decade, there have been a lot of public figures exposed, accused, and convicted of sexual assault and exploitation. Patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity^[2] – the ideological practice that sustains and legitimizes patriarchy and the interests of the powerful in society within historical periods, constitutes the most dominant, most dangerous, and most socially prized form of masculinity available to men – has produced numerous high-profile sex offenders and grotesque sexual predators, such as Bill Cosby, Harvey Weinstein, Jeffery Epstein, and Sean “Diddy” Combs.

One would think in the age of the #MeToo Movement, where greater public attention and scrutiny has been directed toward identifying and incarcerating sexual predators, that Trump would temper his overt misogynistic, capricious, and contemptible behaviors. However, real “playas,” that is, real pimps, believe, arrogantly and fallaciously, that they operate above the law, that they set norms

for what is acceptable and expected, and most of all, because of public admiration, apathy, or personal fear, that the surrounding populus will simply capitulate to their whims. Trump’s objectification of women and his braggadocious demeanor and pseudo-bravado regarding his criminal exploitative escapades demonstrate his disdain for the rule of law and reinforce his persona of being “Teflon Trump!”

Trump was raised in a culture of the privileged that reinforced and supported the ideology of superiority (e.g., I’m smarter than you) with the philosophical view of “win at all costs” and “it’s OK if you can get away with it!” An unrepentant, phallocentric abuser of women, Trump fundamentally believes he is privileged to treat women however he wants. The one-time owner of the Miss Universe organization, which sponsors the Miss USA and Miss Teen USA pageants, Mr. Trump, thought it was appropriate to enter, unannounced, the dressing rooms of pageant contestants (some as young as 14 years old), even when they were naked. Most of the industrialized free world knows about the infamous “hot mic” interview between Donald Trump and Billy Bush, in which Trump stated that, because he was a star, he could do anything he wanted to women, including grabbing their genitalia.

As the 45th president of the United States, when tasked with fulfilling the presidential Oath of Office – “I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States” – then-President Trump, on Jan. 6, 2021, abdicated his responsibilities as president in an attempt to remain in power.



With his open misogyny, and contempt of and insecurity with strong, confident, and successful women such as Vice President Kamala Harris, former U.N. Ambassador and South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley, Fulton County, Georgia District Attorney Fani Willis, former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Congresswoman Maxine Waters, and Brigitte Macron, wife of the President of France, why would we believe the words of former President Donald Trump now when compared to his previous rhetoric and past actions?

Trump has a long and sordid history of violence against women. In truth, his persona is perhaps more iconic and celebrated than Iceberg Slim.[3]

Editor’s note: Essays by Jefferson scholars are the products of their own research and views.

References

[1] CNN YouTube Trump's Message to Women:

<https://youtu.be/6CfiFOUUZ1o?si=RMakvWBOQSEo-ZdL>

[2] Hegemonic masculinity refers to a societal pattern in which stereotypically male traits are idealized as the masculine cultural ideal, explaining how and why men maintain dominant social roles over women and other groups considered to be feminine (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). The article, Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept, *Sage Journals*, 19 (6), <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243205278639> Was retrieved on September 29, 2024.

[3] Born Robert Le Maupin, Iceberg Slim was an American pimp who was also a writer. His book entitled *Pimp: The Story of My Life* sold two million copies and was made into a movie, *The Mack and His Pack*.

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